

SENATE BILL REPORT

SB 5447

As Reported By Senate Committee On:
Education, February 17, 1995

Title: An act relating to tying the use of student learning improvement grants to attaining the student learning goals and essential learning requirements developed by the commission on student learning.

Brief Description: Tying the use of student learning improvement grants to attaining the student learning goals.

Sponsors: Senator McAuliffe; by request of Office of Financial Management.

Brief History:

Committee Activity: Education: 2/7/95; 2/17/95 [DPS].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Majority Report: That Substitute Senate Bill No. 5447 be substituted therefor, and the substitute bill do pass.

Signed by Senators McAuliffe, Chair; Pelz, Vice Chair; Finkbeiner, Gaspard, Hochstatter, Johnson and Rasmussen.

Staff: Leslie Goldstein (786-7424)

Background: The student learning improvement grant program was enacted in 1993 as part of the education reform legislation. Grants were awarded beginning in the 1994-95 school year. The purpose of the grants is to provide funds for additional time and resources for site-based planning activities and staff development, and planning designed to improved student learning consistent with the student learning goals. A total of 1,792 buildings in 287 school districts received grants. Nine districts did not participate.

The Legislature appropriated \$39,934,000 for the program. The grant funds were distributed based upon the number of full-time certificated staff in the district. The grant amount could not exceed \$800 per full-time equivalent staff.

Summary of Substitute Bill: The student learning improvement grants are modified.

Grants must be consistent with applicable essential academic learning requirements. Activities described in the grant application must be consistent with student learning goals and learning requirements.

School boards will not approve schools' plans unless the schools follow the appropriate processes and the plans are consistent with the goals and learning requirements.

By the end of the 1995-96 school year, each school receiving a grant must keep on file its plan to achieve the student learning goals and the essential learning requirements. The plan must document the activities, including staff development, undertaken to implement the plan. The plan must be changed and evaluated in subsequent years.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction is required to provide planning assistance to schools and districts through the Center for the Improvement of Student Learning.

Substitute Bill Compared to Original Bill: Language is deleted requiring student learning improvement grants to be used only for site-based planning activities and associated staff development.

The link between student learning improvement grants and student learning goals and learning requirements is clarified. School boards rather than the Superintendent of Public Instruction are responsible for evaluating the grants applications.

Schools are not required to keep a comprehensive plan on file.

An emergency clause is added.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Not requested.

Effective Date: The bill contains an emergency clause and takes effect immediately.

Testimony: The student learning improvement grants is an investment in education reform. The grants should be used to implement reform. Linking the grants more closely with education reform is appropriate. Local districts need the flexibility to decide how to implement reform. Grants should be used to support planning activities.

The Superintendent of Public Instruction should not decide which grants constitute best practices.

Testified: Mike Bigelow, Office of Financial Management; Walter Ball, Assn. of WA School Principals; Dwayne Slate, WA State School Directors Assn.; Judy Hartmann, WA Education Assn.; Maggie Meizer, Lakes Elementary; North Thurston School District.